

Large Tree (over 40')  
Deciduous

Native  
Map #61

*Bur Oak*  
(*Quercus macrocarpa*)  
Family: *Fagaceae*



**Leaves:** simple, 4-10" long, shape variable, but in general fiddle shaped due to deep middle indentation, lobes rounded, lower portion of the leaf with 2-3 pairs of lobes, upper with 5-7 pairs of ovate lobes; fall - dull yellow, yellow-green to yellow brown.

**Buds:** alternate, shingled, pale gray hairs covering the bud, strap-like stipules (leafy appendages) with the terminal bud cluster.

**Stems:** stout, knobby, yellowish brown, sometimes with corky wings, lenticels are prominent .

**Bark:** dark gray; deeply ridged and furrowed.

**Flowers:** male and female flowers on same plant; males in pendulous catkins, females in tiny spikes: not showy.

**Fruits:** acorn, solitary, usually stalked,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long,  $\frac{1}{2}$  or more of the nut is enclosed in a cap with a fringed edge.

**Habit:** Pyramidal in youth becoming broad-rounded with wide branch angles and bold coarse branching; picturesque.

**Culture:** The bur oak is a very tough and adaptable species. This species tolerates heavy clay soils and will even survive in urban conditions. It is pH adaptable, durable and very long-lived. Although difficult to transplant due to a large tap-root, once established it is a true survivor. Specimens of 2" caliper transplant much more easily than 4" and larger sizes.

Like the other oaks, bur oak has several nuisance insects and disease problems, but they usually are not serious. It is important to only prune oaks when they are dormant as oak wilt can be spread through open pruning cuts during the growing season. Bur oak is in the White Oak group and is therefore less susceptible to Oak Wilt and less likely to succumb to it if infected.

**Miscellaneous:** Specimens of 200-300 years of age with massive trunks are common in the Midwest. The University of Wisconsin Madison campus has a few old bur oaks that have survived the experience of being rifle shot targets when that area was part of Camp Randall.



Fall color



Bark and Branching

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